

Messenger

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The Role of a Business Analyst

The concept of business analysis is recent, but fast growing. The International Institute of Business Analysis began in 2003 and has already grown to over 12,000 members.

According to the *Business Analysis Body of Knowledge (BABOK® Guide)*, “Business analysis is the set of tasks and techniques used to work as a liaison among stakeholders in order to understand the structure, policies, and operations of an organization, and to recommend solutions that enable the organization to achieve its goals.” This involves understanding how organizations function to accomplish their purposes. Knowing how to connect organizational goals to specific objectives, determining a course of action to achieve those goals, and knowing how the organization and stakeholders interact are key functions of a business analyst.

The *BABOK® Guide* is broken up business analysis into six knowledge areas.

Business Analysis Planning and Monitoring

Business analysis planning and monitoring plans the business analysis approach. It determines the overall process that will be followed, how and when tasks will be performed, techniques that will be used, and deliverables that should be produced. An analyst will identify the stakeholders and establish which activities will be performed and when. It is at this time that communication lines and how change is handled will be developed.

Elicitation

Elicitation ensures all needed resources are organized and scheduled. During this time, the analyst will meet with stakeholders to gather information regarding their needs and desires. After he or she has collected all the necessary data, it will be recorded for use in analysis. It is important to check that this information matches the actual problem to ensure the proper result will be reached.

Requirements Management and Communication

During this process, the analyst will obtain and maintain consensus among stakeholders regarding the overall solution scope and the requirements that will be implemented. All requirements must be assessed to see that they fall within the solution scope. It is going to be common to have conflict arise during this process. Knowing how to accurately handle conflict situations and problems that develop is vital. The analyst may have to be the mediator between the conflicting parties in order to reach an agreement. It is his or her job to manage any issues and ensure that those issues are resolved. Once



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***Obstacles are those frightful things you see
when you take your eyes off the goal.***

***Hannah Moore (1745-1833)
Writer and Educator***

The Mathis Group's Messenger

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an agreement has been reached, it is a good idea to have everything in writing and signed by the involved persons.

Enterprise Analysis

Enterprise analysis describes the activities necessary to identify a business need, problem or opportunity. It also defines the solution and justifies the investment of the solution. This is the heart of business analysis. This is where you get down to the nuts and bolts and figure out what exactly needs to be fixed. It may be a change an organization wants to make, an end it is seeking to achieve, or a condition it would like to maintain.

After the need has been determined, the analyst evaluates if there are any gaps between where the organization is and where it would like to be. A detailed solution is then created. When coming up with a solution, make sure that the organization is capable of implementing and effectively using it. It should describe how the chosen solution will deliver the solution scope, break delivery down into specific releases, and provide a road map that indicates the timeframe in which a capability can be expected.



Requirements Analysis

The first thing that must be done in requirements analysis is to prioritize the requirements. This ensures that analysis and implementation efforts focus on the most critical requirements. This can be based on risk, urgency, policy or likelihood of success. Next, organize the requirements. This creates a set of views of the requirements for the new business solution that are comprehensive, complete, consistent, and understood from all stakeholder perspectives. Finally, verifying the

requirements ensures that they have been defined correctly and meet quality standards.

Solution Assessment and Validation

Solution assessment and validation determines whether the solution delivers enough business value to justify its implementation. Validating the solution ensures that it meets the business needs on an ongoing basis. The analyst will assess the effect it has had, both positive and negative.

Doing a successful analysis of a situation will generate viable options and will lead you to the best solution. Understanding how to become a first-rate analyst will be a benefit to both you and your organization.



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